

ACORN



R. I. P.

• 999 •

Born of
NECESSITY &
A Great Architect
JOHN G. HOWARD Esq.

• 1846 •

Relict of Canada West
Departed This Life
After a Lingering Illness
of conservative negligence

• 1976 •

PROLOGUE:

Architectural Conservancy Ontario Revived Newsletter is born, perhaps to grow into an OAK, Ontario Architecture Kept — or whatever your sense and sentiment dictate. One of our problems has always been to get together, to pass word of encouragement, support and strength to bolster ideas by unity of purpose and diversity of activity, in other words to get on with the job and let everyone know about what goes on in the world of preservation. And after forty-three years of activity, the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario has a fund of experience, a treasury of stories, and like most treasuries these days there is the occasional deficit.

The editor, new at the job, takes this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to this and coming Newsletters and at the same time seeks any contribution such as news, opinion, local activities, coming events, book reviews, commentary and marginalia. Our membership is broad and interested in any information even touching on conservation, not only of buildings, but of landscape and townscape.

If you have not been represented in this issue please get your material into our hands before 15th June 1976, the deadline for the next compilation of ACORN.

In future we hope to have contributions from the Ontario Heritage Foundation on current events concerning preservation projects. While most members also belong to Heritage Canada, there will be items in its publication which bear repeating.

Recognition and special thanks are due my long-suffering secretary, Mrs. K. R. Courtney, who typed written reams into printable material.

SENSIBILITY:

A capacity to feel, to be exceptionally open to emotional impressions, or even susceptible to them should never be condemned providing it is tempered with common sense. My own "twist", as it were, of this generous word is that balance of sense and sensitivity, the idea that nurtured the Picturesque, a hard, fine line to follow, but leading one past all the considerations which make the preservation of our heritage encouraging and rewarding, the preservation of a heritage of other people's thoughts, actions and aspirations for present use and future enjoyment. Preservation of our heritage is not an activity isolated from the current concern with people, but constantly attempts to make change less abrupt, less disturbing and continuity of life more apparent. It involves, too, understanding, respect and not a little love of human beings.

In defence of sensibility and any offences against it will be often the theme of our editorials.

CONSERVATIVELY SPEAKING:

R.I.P. 999

Perhaps the saddest event to report is the wrecking of one of John Howard's most famous, or to some infamous,

buildings, the old Asylum at 999 Queen Street West in Toronto. The whole story is sad, even to the last fight, too late to save the day, in decisions made long ago compromising any preservation and the total disrespect and horrifying lack of understanding for a building grandly conceived in its day and coming down to us partly mutilated and almost wholly scorned.

John Howard's building was a grand scheme, immense for its time, and finally considered too large to cope with as a rehabilitation or so it was stated despite a recent study suggesting other possibilities. Apparently in the original, as in most schemes for public buildings, cost paring was practised, but despite this Howard's design came through as a strong massing of elements with variety in outline and silhouette creating great interest. Its setting far back from Queen Street at the foot of Ossington Avenue was an impressive sight — a view which has been lost for almost twenty years by the utter disrespect shown by later reputable designers who drew another six hundred foot veil of masonry across the face, now being suffered to remain and be converted at considerable cost. Justice perhaps for not caring more, for not acting before.

A few words about 999 as we sensed it in its last glorious moments, and memory should serve us well to instil a little of the imagination which was essential to understand it and ensure its preservation. The main Howard plan was apparently never finished, the wing extensions behind were by Kivas Tully some twenty or more years later and though sympathetic differed in the slightly attenuated designs often practised by that architect and using his favourite stone for dressings, Cleveland sandstone which soils so separately in a city atmosphere. Howard used a hard stone to decorate windows, cornices and pilaster capitals and this stayed remarkably fresh. His brick was the familiar grey stock of Toronto, of excellent quality, and laid in English bond. His windows, where wood, were divided in the familiar pane and a half in width so common from 1840 to 1860. Some sash were wrought iron, but most had been replaced over the years. The silhouette with varying heights of attics and the central feature rising another storey with its prominent dome, was further elaborated by stacks of clustered chimney and ventilating flues and originally two matching round stacks for boilers.

The plan was perhaps one of the greatest drawbacks for easy conversion and rehabilitation for new uses, but such problems were not insurmountable. Internally it was a balance of generously wide corridors of great length in some areas with small rooms on either side separated by massive bearing walls making communication between cells for modern use difficult. Towards the centre the corridor was single loaded, sun flooding in through windows on the south side on bright days. Then the centre block contained generously sized rooms, many with fireplaces with stone mantelpieces and cast iron coal-burning grates. Some rooms near the top, because of the exterior design had skied windows high in the walls, and the top floor stepped up in the centre core.

Most of the stairs had been replaced but vestiges of the main central staircase survived, a simple bold detail rugged enough to stand hard usage. The tour de force was, of course, the dome itself interestingly articulated on the exterior with raised lobes, and protecting the building's water cistern while concealing a magnificent example of the joiner's art, a hanging spiral staircase which gave access originally to the lantern at the top serving in the old days as a beacon to navigators on Lake Ontario.

What was particularly fascinating to anyone technically inclined concerned the heating and ventilating systems. The building had baseboard radiation provided by continuous double piping around the outside walls. This wrought iron pipe was set in a plastered groove in the brickwork and was faced by a baseboard provided with knockouts exposing most of the pipe. In some of the central block rooms this piping was carefully bent around and into the embrasures of the windows which reached the floor. In the window of the main stair the pipe was fashioned into a coil to form a radiator under the south window. Baseboard heating may have been quite an idea in the mid. 1840's. It was apparently specified as a proprietary system at the time.

Ventilation was another point of interest. But regrettably this system apparently never worked well if at all, and we suspect we know why. The corridors running through the length of the building were flanked by heavy brick walls from basement to attic. Starting at the basement level and from floors above curious open mouthed "snakeheads", an angled pipe with V shaped opening fitting into the angle of the wall and ceiling, were connected with vertical flues running into cross flues at the top of the wall. These cross flues were capped with stone and supplemented by horizontal flues of vitrified clay tile of bell and spigot pattern cemented together which traversed the attic level. These tile flues of various sizes led into curious furnaces set on stone flags in the attics. The furnaces had double iron doors and a place for grate bars and were constructed of brick with iron vaulted liner to the roof, the iron smokepipe passing through this into a chimney flue nearby originally. The only other outlet came off the top of the chamber, and again was a clay tile pipe about 8" in diameter leading into an adjacent flue. Flues entering the chamber formed by the inner brick and iron lining were several, from 8" and more in diameter. Later attempts to improve the system included large diameter sheet metal ducts directly connected to the larger tile flues and led through the roof as ventilators. It is surmised that the principle involved preheating the air by means of the furnace to stimulate natural convection. But how air, especially expanded warm air, was expected to circulate through an outlet many times smaller than the incoming ducts, is a mystery. And it did not work, the building being notorious at times for its foul air. A simple correction could have been made but never was, namely to increase the volume of the collecting chamber and the size of both outlet and exhaust flue.

How long the baseboard radiation operated is not known,

but isolating valves could not be seen and any breakdown or leak would have been difficult to repair. Circulation might have been problematical too if relying on convection currents without forced circulation by pumps, and heating possibly erratic, the ends of the lines probably circulating almost cold water. But it was a brave beginning. Later a more conventional system, presumably steam, with cast-iron radiators succeeded it.

Down through the years the building suffered abuses, disfigurement, the original detail lost and replaced by unsympathetic changes, the building gradually denuded of the grandeur it originally had, covered by layers of institutional paint in the usual ghastly mediocrity of institutional colours, repairs to the fabric made without reference to preservation procedures accompanied by sheer neglect of proper maintenance. So the building showed evidence of brown rot occasioned by leaking roofs, (what 19th century building is free from this trouble?) and brickwork decayed by broken stone joints and disconnected downspouts was repaired often callously with brick not matching or even patched with mortar, probably cement, a great enemy to old brickwork.

In the 1940's two hideous red brick additions were constructed in the angle between rear wing extensions and the main block, these dining halls mostly lighted by glass brick! Finally to add the final insult, the last injury which sealed the doom of this magnificent building a 600' veil was constructed across the north front in 1957 and corridor connections thrust into the openings of the centre block, like a last straw sucking its lifeblood.

The decision to remove John Howard's building and its extension by Kivas Tully came as long ago as 1968, and determined the extensive rebuilding programme to the south of the building. Howard's masterpiece was now in a modern straitjacket devoid of all dignity, seemingly the work of an architect no longer respected by his successors, a sad cause for sadder reflection.

The last fight was too late, and though Jack Diamond's report proved the feasibility of conserving and rehabilitating this noble structure, officialdom and bureaucracy had taken its inexorable course slowly gathering momentum to crush all other consideration. Or look at it another way as an inertia which stifled imagination, coupled with long delayed response to alarm, an all too common occurrence in the preservation field.

A sad reflection. Sadder too that this noble building suffered in so many minds a stigma, the kind of stigma that long ago saw the loss of George Dance's greatest architectural work, Newgate Prison, and the more recent demise of "Gorsebrook", the mansion of Halifax's privateer and entrepreneur of the early 19th century, Enos Collins. Is the loss of 999 any sadder than the ignominious end of Kivas Tully's old Trinity College of 1851 at the head of Strachan Avenue, barely a block away, a quarter of a century ago, a romantic Gothic pile, disused, disrespected and demolished

by the City of Toronto? Or the loss of other government and institutional buildings constantly in jeopardy, no longer useful and no longer treated with imagination like Lincoln County prison being pulled down right now in St. Catharines, or the mid-19th century head office of the Welland Canal lost a few years ago in the same city. Is it any worse than the demolition of the finest Courthouse in the land, when it was built in 1817, by the people of Niagara earlier in this century?

Preservation is a ghastly balance sheet, the Grange or Cawthra House, Cobourg's Victoria Hall or Old Trinity College, Galt City Hall or Brockville's Bank of Montreal, Perth's Matheson House or London's Cronyn House. Eric Arthur's No Mean City is a grim reminder of Toronto's former architectural glory.

And on reflection, conservatively speaking, the story of 999 indicates the need for constant watch, complete information and early intervention in the cause for preservation generally, especially where landmarks are concerned and also where communities are endangered. Old buildings need understanding, require respect, demand imagination. 999 has no longer a landmark, so 999 R.I.P.

P. J. S.

NEWS FROM EAST TO WEST

PORT HOPE:

The first President of the Port Hope branch of Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, A. B. (Peter) Schultz, did much that was positive and good toward preserving and restoring Port Hope's essential architectural quality. Before he died in 1969 he had, among other projects, bought and begun restoration of the old St. Lawrence Hotel on Walton Street. Recently that building acquired new owners. Harbortown Heritage Corporation has done additional work on the building.

The Port Hope Branch of the Conservancy, together with non-member 'Friends of Peter' commissioned a bronze commemorative plaque for the front of the St. Lawrence. The plaque was unveiled on December 14th, 1975 during a simple and effective ceremony.

The local council, in cooperation with ACO, Harbortown Heritage and Ontario Heritage Foundation has now approved designation for the St. Lawrence Hotel.

The plaque reads:

In memory of
Albert B. (Peter) Schultz
1923-1969

native of Port Hope, who, recognizing the beauty and value of this main street, had the vision and courage in 1965 to purchase and to begin the restoration of the St. Lawrence Hotel, built in 1853.

Mrs. Garland is compiling a list of bank buildings which have been demolished and replaced with new bank structures. She is also listing banks which have restored or modified their old buildings, leaving the façades as originally

built. Any information you may have in this connection, of bank structures in Ontario, please send to Mrs. Marion Garland, 86 Augusta Street, Port Hope, Ontario.

Mrs. Garland and Mr. Ralph Yates attended the second Central Ontario Region Council of Heritage Canada held at Port Perry, on Saturday, September 27, 1975. The delegate for the Central Ontario Region, Mrs. Garland, was also made the secretary.

The Conservancy is sponsoring the Kenneth Clark series of the Civilization movies. Final plans are not completed, but the first showing is expected shortly.

TORONTO:

Various activities have been continuing in the great city, and more details are expected next time round.

The demise of John Howard's building at 999 Queen Street West is the subject of this Newsletter's editorial: a sad reflection and rather a plague on all our houses.

HAMILTON:

The coming House Tour sponsored by the Grimsby Historical Society is mentioned in coming events. This will include the Lewis House of Winona, Ontario, illustrated here:



On 21st August 1975 the first hearing of the Conservation Review Board was held in the City Hall to consider the City of Hamilton's designation of Sandyford Place, a handsome stone terrace of four houses built c.1855 on the edge of the downtown area. A developer owning three quarters of the block was opposing the designation. Several expert witnesses were called, including Arthur Wallace, Anthony Adamson and local preservationists Grant Head and others. The decision was in favour of the City, designation was upheld and the enacting by-law passed on 16th August. More recent developments are not known.

Gil Simmons drew attention to Canada's Bill C-253 before the House of Commons, an Act to provide for the establishment of a Canada Sea Coast Conservation Authority, and the contentious item, fortunately resolved in favour of groups, not unlike the ACO, supporting conservation: these are noted in Marginalia.

CAMBRIDGE:

HERITAGE CAMBRIDGE has been very active. Because Cambridge is in the process of formulating an Official Plan much of our energy has been spent trying to ensure that heritage areas, buildings, and values will be considered and protected as far as possible. This concern led us to oppose the construction of a 17 storey high-rise which Baycrest Consolidated Holdings Limited plans to raise near the river in the Galt core area. Construction of a high-rise on the valley floor would be completely out of scale and would jeopardize the whole character of the heart of old Galt. If one high-rise is built here, others will soon follow, and our distinctive sky-line and atmosphere will be irretrievably lost. HERITAGE CAMBRIDGE has urged that the development take the form of a low-rise structure which could easily provide similar facilities and density. Our opposition resulted in a three week long hearing before the Ontario Municipal Board, where our case was most ably put by Professor Dennis Hefferon. A decision has not yet been given.

HERITAGE CAMBRIDGE has also set up a Building Evaluation Jury to help choose buildings for Heritage Designation.

In 1974 HERITAGE CAMBRIDGE received a grant of \$20,000 from Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation to enable us to do a study of significant areas and buildings in Cambridge, leading to the production of publications, slide programs and graphic work for public use and education. We have done the study and are in the process of sorting and evaluating the vast amount of material we now have. This spring we expect to publish a "Walking Tour" of the Galt core area, and will follow that with a "Driving Tour" of the whole of Cambridge.

Early in December Anthony Adamson spoke to us at a most interesting meeting. That night we received a set of five drawings of heritage buildings in Cambridge done by the well-known artist, Richard Brown. These were presented to us by Mr. James Chaplin, through the generosity of Canadian General-Tower Limited. We have had a limited series of prints made from these drawings. These really excellent prints can be bought from HERITAGE CAMBRIDGE board members or at "The Galt Place" on Water Street or the "Knotty Pine Gift Shop" in Preston.

For the last two years HERITAGE CAMBRIDGE has been fighting to preserve a fine old stone building — Preston Central School. Though we were joined in this battle by the Preston Citizens Action Committee, it now appears that this last publicly-owned stone building in Preston will be demolished. (A last-ditch effort is being made by a group of

citizens petitioning the Lieut. Governor of Ontario.) (Editor's Note: A very telling story of the battle was presented by Mr. Gerald Musselman of Heritage Cambridge at the last Annual General Meeting. Copies are available from A.C.O. Head Office.)

STRATFORD:

Heritage Stratford has recently joined the A.C.O. as an affiliate after their representative Mr. James Anderson attended the 4th February 1976 A.C.O. Council Meeting. Their first report, here unabridged, makes good reading:

HERITAGE STRATFORD

Stratford may be a sleepy-looking place to many of its visitors but it has a rich heritage worth defending. The beauty of the future townsite was pointed out to the Canada Company by Indians and squatters who were lingering around the ford on a "pretty" stream. The land for several farms around the site was originally owned by Col. Anthony Van Egmond of Seaforth who got nabbed by the army in Toronto one day in 1837. He was evidently going down the road to help in leading a rebellion but somebody spoiled the show and he got collected in the mopping up operation and died from an overdose of hospitality in the Toronto jail.

So Stratford began as a Canada Company afterthought in 1832 at the point where the Huron Road makes a kink on the way to Goderich. John McDonald simplified the interesting layout of the 5 principal streets, which as township boundary road allowances, radiated from a single point. Great credit must be given to the far-sighted village leaders and the GTR engineers who placed the railway stations (there were two) almost a mile away in a huge mosquito swamp and then created an arbitrary triangular town square half way out to the new port of entry.

On this site in a setting of stumps a beautiful and spacious Town Hall and Market Building 100 feet square rose to become the nucleus of architecture, business and social life in Stratford. It was gutted by fire when 40 years old.

The locomotive repair shops which guaranteed a 30-year boom (1870-1900) and the furniture industry which didn't, brought a remarkable collection of people together in this isolated community. The rich farmland around is still managed by descendants of cautious farmers handpicked by The Canada Company.

Until 1955 approximately, within this century, the aesthetics of Stratford were largely due to the civic involvement of resident furniture designers and architects. Years ago when the Festival was new, Tyrone Guthrie thundered against trinket trash and artsy façades.

In 1930 Stratford was an unspoiled magnificent well-planned community, by 1940 some plastic storefronts began to appear, and by 1950 the local Planning Board spawned by the Planning Act appeared on the scene as guarantor and saviour. It was an effective means to curb the

usual aspirations of the nouveau riche as in other communities but the saddest loss to Stratford was long range planning by public consensus. The worst possible blunders have taken place since the Planning Board began to sit.

In the last 15 years Stratford has paid many ransoms (feasibility studies) to keep what remains of its 1930 splendour from being bulldozed and a long noisy row saved the City Hall from a string of re-developers who have now moved over to attack the principal intersection and the imposing Gordon Block.

Following three years of secrecy the citizens learned for the first time in July 1975 the details of an agreement in which two acres of buildings were to be flattened by a scheme a block long and the size of the T-D Tower in Toronto if it were lying on its side . . . in Stratford! The citizens were helpless to stop it — so it seemed. Anyway, a group quickly formed and organized themselves as Heritage Stratford and immediately applied for a charter and affiliation with Heritage Canada.

The only public exposure for the long secret project was an OMB hearing for approval of debentures for a parking garage and benefitting assessment in the area. The city didn't seem to be worried about opposition.

Advice was sought by Heritage Stratford from three people seasoned in OMB hearings who all warned that only a handful of lawyers in Ontario could handle this case effectively. Finally, Burton Kellock, with Brent Claridge assisting, came to Stratford to assess the situation. A fertile case was found but the matter of money had to be faced head on. Lawyers sometimes find citizens groups evaporate before the dust of battle dies down. The matter was resolved in Stratford's unique way of personal loans, and a frightful figure of \$6,000.00 was being bandied about for the cost of the OMB hearing. Heritage Stratford bravely decided to plunge in. There was no way out. If the garage were approved then the whole of the project hinging on it would proceed. Heritage Stratford and objecting citizens were backed up against a wall. Out came petitions to save architecture, stuff piled up for a trash and treasure sale and ovens did overtime for market sales.

A rival group, "Concerned Merchants for Progress", formed with ready cash, loud ads and brave noise. Their dream of riding around on the coat-tails of a developer rather than providing concerted opposition to a parasitic shopping mall was being threatened. Actually their aims were much the same as ours, that the downtown needed new life but we disagreed on HOW it should be done.

The hearing lasted a total of eight days with a six week recess in the middle of it. The city's presentation was so protracted one might have thought it was filibuster which it wasn't. Meanwhile costs soared as witnesses sat and sat before being called, etc. And how they soared!

Finally in January the OMB decision came out approving the project with conditions. City Hall was ecstatic until they read the report from back to front. At first Heritage

Stratford felt crushed. The main condition was that our lawyer, Burton Kellock, would examine any proposal when a building permit was to be issued. Our main point in the hearing was that the city's land assembly was illegal. Heritage Stratford was advised by Mr. Kellock at one point that a lawsuit against the city would be faster. However, the end would have been messy so we chose the safer and far more expensive route. The OMB decision specified that the city should pay Heritage Stratford an award of \$3,000.00. The final bill to the citizens of Stratford via Heritage Stratford was in excess of \$16,200.00.

How much are citizens expected to endure? We feel that the Planning Act should be revamped as the Conservancy and Planning Act combining the Heritage Act with the Planning Act so that citizens do not have to fight for conservancy. They don't have to fight for planning of new projects. Conservancy is a right for sane living that has been long denied. We feel there should also be easier access to fees for citizens to fight City Hall if the need arises and also a move by the government to throw out politicians voting for illegal acts. If it is part of the Municipal Act then the government should execute it themselves so that citizens should not have to go through costly lawsuits. Perhaps citizen groups should be reimbursed for legal fees in OMB hearings equal to what the municipality spends on the same case. If this were so, municipalities would go to greater lengths to get public involvement and support to avoid contested hearings. The OMB could rule on whether or not every hearing was justified, to act as a check. Certainly something has to be done about the existing Planning Act.

Heritage Stratford, having a fee sharing arrangement with Heritage Canada is pleased to be an associate member of The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario for a flat fee of \$25.00. Cooperation like this amongst groups with similar interests is the best way to gain ground in the area of protecting manmade and natural surroundings.

Interested and concerned readers may make donations payable to Heritage Stratford, 41 James Street, Stratford. We have a registered income tax number.

J. A.

LONDON:

Legislation for conservation is the "tool" we require in order to make progress in our commitment. So that London A.C.O. members can move knowledgeably and urge our Municipal Government to provide that "tool" in the form of by-laws, our Branch will have heard Professor Norman Pearson, of the Political Science Department, University of Western Ontario, speak on the subject of Legislation and Conservation at the March 17th meeting.

As well, at the same meeting, slides of a Victorian street-scene were shown. The slides are the outcome of the joint acquisition of the London Public Library and the London Region Branch, of a treatise on Wolfe Street by the architect-artist Nina Jabalonska — now a teacher in Toronto. Her

excellent drawings and historical notes form a record of one of London's loveliest Victorian streetscapes. Microfilms and slides of the work are the means whereby teachers and students can make use of the valuable study.

An additional item on the Agenda was a brief description — with photographs circulated — by the Manager of the Norwich Union Insurance Company, Mr. Barry Felker — of that Company's new Victoria, B.C. Branch Office in the house formerly occupied by the Lieutenant Governors of British Columbia. The house has been refurbished only; the architectural character has in no way been changed. For a number of years the London Branch Office in a carefully refurbished Edwardian home — with no structural changes — has been inspirational to similar conservation projects in the older parts of London. In its immediate neighbourhood "Norwich House" has had a catalytic influence on both sides of the street. The trio of large Edwardian homes — of which "Norwich House" was the first to be so handsomely refurbished — now forms an admirably coordinated mini-street-scene. The Norwich Union's active contribution to architectural conservation started many years ago in the idea of the "Norwich Plan" for rejuvenating older downtown areas.

A recent contribution by the artist, Silvia Clarke, an Executive Member, to a collection of architectural drawings owned by the University Women's Club, and circulated by the London Art Gallery, will be officially presented at the March meeting. Miss Clarke's drawing is of a Victorian mansion "Waverley" circa 1881; the mansion has been owned, used and carefully preserved since the 1940's by the Shute Institute — a medical clinic. Much of its exuberant interior detail survives.

An Executive Member, Mr. Tony Jeffery, formerly with the Greater London Council, London, England in preservation work, and now a teacher in London, Ontario will follow Professor Pearson on April 21st with an illustrated lecture on the recent advances in conservation legislation in England and the happy results thereby. Executive Members will put forth valiant efforts to encourage attendance, at both lectures, by Members of the City Council.

The decision of the London City Council to initiate Area planning with citizens complementing Planning Department staff was favourable to historic area conservation. Such a successful joint-planning was done for the first time last year in an older area of the City. Sixteen representatives in all from the four areas in the Central London District will form the C.A.G., Citizen's Advisory Group, which will devote much time and thought to the needs of the neighbourhoods in this second project to be undertaken. The Central London District contains four neighbourhoods which, very likely, in the future will be declared Historic Conservation Districts.

The date of building 1853 is in one gable, the monogram of the builder, Samuel Peters, is in the other, and the initials

of Ann and Samuel Peters are intertwined in a lover's knot in the coloured glass transom of the main entrance of Grosvenor Lodge. This large Victorian home in a "Tudor Gothic" style, now the property of the University of Western Ontario, is the subject of negotiations between that body and the London Public Library and Museums Board. If it should be acquired by the City of London, Grosvenor Lodge will become the London History Centre.

Presently, in London, a group is recording the results of their research in coloured and stained glass. Their photo — documentary will be contained in two reference books for the Public Library.

The London Region Branch will have its third Annual Architectural Tour on the first Sunday in June, the 6th. Write to Susan Wilson, 23 Peters Street, London, Ontario. N6B 3A3 for further information.

S. W.

WOODSTOCK:

Woodstock, represented by Mr. E. Bennett at the A.C.O. Council meeting of 3 March 1976, suggested that affiliation with the London Branch would probably be arranged shortly.

HURON COUNTY:

In September, 1975 a programme was organized for the winter season on the theme "The Restoration of Historic Buildings". This provided speakers for four meetings, Stephen Otto, Brian Garrett, Dorothy Duncan and Philip Dunning. It has proved to be very popular and about fifty new members have joined the Branch as a result. The meetings were held at the Little Inn in Bayfield.

For January 1976 the Huron County Branch sponsored a Heritage Day essay or craft contest in the secondary schools in the County on the subject of Heritage and offered prizes.

Numerous letters have been written in support of local and provincial heritage causes, e.g. Exeter and Clinton Town Halls, 999 Queen Street, Toronto.

Our president has written a newsletter and is in the process of illustrating it for distribution throughout the County. This is our second newsletter, the first published about a year ago. We are at this time very short of funds so it may be some time before we can raise the necessary \$200.00 for the printing.

(Editor's Note: Let's see a copy of your newsletter as soon as it comes from the press.)

AROUND AND ABOUT: HAPPENINGS IN ONTARIO

AMHERSTBURG:

The Town of Amherstburg, a community of great character and with a fascinating older central area has started building designation and is carrying on to studies of its downtown core for further enhancement of the historical and architectural heritage leading ultimately to the declaration of an Historic Conservation District.

BARRIE:

Schemes for rehabilitation of the Old Fire Hall (1876, enlarged 1904) as a community centre combining small theatre, art gallery and workshops for local organizations are approaching final proposal stage under Architects Howard D. Chapman and Howard V. Walker, with Peter John Stokes consulting.

COBOURG:

The second phase of Victoria Hall's preservation is underway with the installation of services in hand promising to put at least a substantial part of the building back into use by the end of the year. Your help is still needed to complete the rest including the magnificent painted Concert Hall. Send any contributions you can to *The Society for the Restoration of Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West, Cobourg, Ontario*. Receipts will be provided for income tax purposes.

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE:

Designation of buildings has commenced: some concern has been shown. The local approach, probably unique, is the seeking of support from private owners by asking them to volunteer their buildings for designation. An odd way to go about it, but response is forthcoming.

PORT HOPE:

The Port Hope Branch plans to set up shortly a "Preservation Bureau" (our name for it), to aid and advise those seeking help in the preservation of old buildings. More details next time.

REVIEW:

Remedial and Restorative Reading by Susan Wilson

"Passing beneath one of these low portals, however, I found myself gazing down as noble a church vista as any you need desire. The cathedral is of magnificent length, and the screen between nave and choir has been removed, so that from stem to stern, as one may say, of the great vessel of the church, is all an avenue of multitudinous slender columns, terminating in what seems a great screen of ruby and sapphire and topaz — one of the finest east windows in England." Henry James commenting upon Lichfield Cathedral in his book "English Hours" first published in

1905; second edition 1960. Wm Heinemann Ltd.

After we have wearied somewhat of long labour of our conservancy cause, we are in need of a remedy, we are in need of a morale restorative. A book of très riches heures, of hours of sheer delight and ecstasy to more than satisfy such needs, is the book from which the above quotation was extracted. For those with a strong predilection for matters architectural, there cannot but be a deepening and refining of one's own senses upon reading James' essays — sixteen in all — contained in "English Hours". Henry James' great awareness, sensitivity, and appreciation, because of his ability as a writer, are communicated easily, and with intensity, to the reader.

James found particular beauty in the long twilight of the English day and the effect on architecture — "the first dimness of twilight" . . . "When the long June twilight turns at last to a deeper grey and the quiet of the close to a deeper stillness."

Please allow us but one more short quotation from James' idyllic "escapist literature" — perhaps sufficient to convince A.C.O. members of the multitudinous sensual joys to be found in this literary treasure.

From "Wells and Salisbury", an essay that first was printed in August 1872: "(The picture's) main feature is the little grey-walled island on which the Palace (at Well's Cathedral) stands, rising in feudal fashion out of a broad, clear moat, flanked with round towers and approached by a proper drawbridge. Along the outer side of the moat is a short walk beneath a row of picturesquely stunted elms; swans and ducks disport themselves in the current and ripple the bright shadows of the overclambering plants from the episcopal gardens and masses of wallflower lodged on the hoary battlements. On the evening of my visit the hay-makers were at work on a great sloping field in the rear of the Palace, and the sweet perfume of the tumbled grass in the dusky air seemed all that was wanting to fix the scene for ever in the memory."

A more recently published book — May, 1974 — and as of March 1975, in its third impression, is "A Walk Along the Wall" by Hunter Davies. Pub. Wiedenfeld Nicolson. Mr. Davies' Walk through the Hadrian's Wall Country has resulted in an illuminating and informative account of the past, the present and the promising future. His account of the archaeological research that is being carried on by individuals and groups is inspirational; the descriptions of individuals and groups who are unmoved by heritages, to us who suffer from similar lack of interest here, are therapeutic. As well, Mr. Davies refers after to the Government's role in recovering and preserving the Wall — of prime interest to those who are concerned with archaeology and legislation.

MARGINALIA:

The Citizens Workshop on the Planning Act Review sponsored by the Community Planning Association of Canada and held in Mississauga on 3rd March 1976 was

attended by your President, John McFarland, and Mrs. R. J. (A. K.) Sculthorpe, Council Member from the Port Hope Branch. We hope to have a report for our next issue of ACORN. Any member who has attended other workshops and would like to comment please write to us.

Private Groups sponsoring conservation:

Dick Beddoes reported in the Toronto Globe and Mail (3 February 1976) the impending suit by a developer the City of Mississauga and SOTAS (Save Our Trees And Streams) the developer contending that he "suffered substantial damages by the illegal conduct of the defendants". We learn, fortunately, that this action was dismissed.

Bill C.253: The Canada Sea Coast Conservation Authority Act (CSCCA Act?).

This concerns all provinces with a sea coast. The object is to protect the beauty of Canada's coastlines and to oversee the conservation for public recreational use of the sea coasts of Canada which are accessible to the public. The Authority may advise the Governor in Council in making an inventory of Canada's sea coasts with regard to accessibility, recreational potential, ownership, acquisition cost estimate as well as outlining the methods by which conservation and access may best be improved.

Part 8 refers, under subsection (d), to its power to enter into agreements with provinces, municipalities (with provincial consent), private persons, citizens' groups, associations and corporations, CMHC, Heritage Canada — to protect and conserve buildings reflecting the traditional architecture of the various coastal regions of Canada, and in (e) to promote awareness and to encourage usage (sic) of traditional maritime architectural forms which are compatible with and aesthetically complimentary to the landscapes and seascapes of Canada's various coastlines.

So it seems Moose Factory has at last a chance.

The Advisory Board of A.C.O. is being revived. We expect recent appointments and a statement of its objectives to be announced by the next ACORN.

A.C.O. is currently on a campaign to seek financial support from professions and business involved in the preservation movement. Branches will be asked to help so watch for developments.

COMING EVENTS:

Sunday, 6 June 1976: Annual Architectural Tour, London, Ontario sponsored by the London Branch A.C.O. For details contact Susan Wilson, 23 Peters Street, London, Ontario. N6B 3A3.

Saturday, 12 June 1976, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.: Grimsby Historical Society House Tour. Admission \$4.00 per person.

Saturday, 12 June 1976, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.: Niagara Tour of Houses: Price \$5.00 per person. Tickets are limited so, if interested, write to the Niagara Foundation, Box 790, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario for further details.

Monday, July 12 to Friday, July 16, 1976: The Summer Campus of the University of Guelph to be held at Elora.

Architectural Conservancy: From the Top Down, practical hints in building preservation (your editor in charge) at the Wellington County Museum. Fee \$50.00.

Textile Crafts, the Work of the Hands, Fee \$30.00 and Antiques and 19th Century Ontario, Fee \$30.00, both at Wellington Place. For further information contact: The Office of Continuing Education, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario.

Wednesday, 29 September through Saturday, 2 October 1976, possibly with post Conference tours. APT (Association for Preservation Technology) Annual Conference Hamilton/Niagara-on-the-Lake. Watch for further details.

Please send all ACORN material to:

Peter John Stokes,
Box 170, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.
LOS 1J0

Au revoir until Issue 2 in June.

STOP PRESS

We have just received from the Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs the Draft Plan for the Parkway Belt West, controlling a corridor, with cross corridors, between Dundas and Markham. Public hearings are to begin in May.

On pages 11 and 12, under 5.3.1 Control Actions Throughout Parkway Belt West, part (b)(i) Control by Official Plans and Zoning; paragraph (4) states: "Official plans and zoning by-laws of municipalities in Parkway Belt West should be so written or revised where legally possible to contain provisions to enhance and preserve the rural character of the area covered by the Plan. Such municipal regulation would involve restrictions on erection of signs and billboards, adequate maintenance of property, preservation of trees and architecturally or historically significant buildings and fostering of adequate agricultural practices."

Which dictum taken on the face of it is very heart-warming support: the obverse of this coin contains considerable reference to linear facilities such as transportation routes, utility rights of way and other elements very often not conducive to preservation. This is the time for updating the Parkway Belt West building inventory, perhaps a worthwhile activity of the revived A.C.O. Advisory Board.

Peter John Stokes

LATE NEWS FROM TORONTO

The Toronto Branch of the Conservancy has begun a research project to fill a need for reference material on Ontario builders and architects. Our goal is to start an alphabetical card file of architects which would be available to the public. It would complement the "ARCHIDONT" file in the Toronto Public Library in which buildings are listed under streets and localities. Many of our rural buildings and pre 1900 buildings were the work of carpenter-builders rather than architect-builders and information on both groups of men should be included. Until the 1880's formal training was obtained through apprenticeship. We have set 1940 as a cut off date since few men, trained pre 1900, would be actively practicing past that date. Therefore, anyone graduated after 1940 will not be included in the file.

Such a file would be a starting point for further study on an individual builder. It could be a ready source for background on the architect of a building threatened with demolition. When a building's designer can be presented to the public as a personality rather than an anonymity it is easier to stimulate interest in the history of the building itself. Evaluating the importance of a particular building becomes possible when considered as one of a list of works done by that architect. We are not true believers in the axiom "a building is its own statement". The time, talent and training of the architect is involved in each building and information about its creator should be easily attainable.

Some of our members have begun searching primary sources, newspapers, periodicals etc. for facts. Others are adding information to the files by recording data from building permits in the City Archives or by personal interviewing. The latter is in conjunction with another project we have underway to produce a building history of Rosedale, once a suburb of Toronto.

We wish to record as completely as possible the following facts on each card

1. Full name, date and place of birth and death of architect.
2. Education and training; where and when acquired.
3. Dates when practicing profession; and where.
4. Partnership details.
5. Listing of buildings
 - a) name
 - b) location (past and present address)
 - c) date(s)
 - d) source of information (*very important*)
 - e) alteration or demolition, dates.

On the back of the card:

1. Additional biographical facts of interest, professional affiliations etc.
2. Possible sources for further study.
3. Other relevant information e.g. designs submitted in competition.

Research by other Conservancy members would help us all "build" a more complete and useful file. Any assistance would be gratefully received.

Address:

Toronto Region of the Architectural Conservancy.
c/o Mrs. Carolyn Neal,
166 Crescent Road,
Toronto, Ontario. M4W 1Y2

Editor's Note:

Presumably this will fill out other biographical material already available, but certainly not complete, such as references in Eric Arthur's No Mean City.

